



CHRISTIANITY AND RENEWAL – INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

# Pentecostal Public Theology

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Engaged Christianity and  
Transformed Society in Europe

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*Edited by*  
Simo Frestadius · Mark J. Cartledge

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# Christianity and Renewal - Interdisciplinary Studies

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Editors

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACCL	Amsterdam Council of Christian Leaders
ACEA	African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance
AdD	<i>les Assemblées de Dieu de France</i> (French Assemblies of God)
ADI	<i>Assemblee di Dio in Italia</i> (Assemblies of God in Italy)
AGWM	Assemblies of God World Missions
AoG	Assemblies of God Great Britain
BCCF	Black Church Civic Forum
BFP	<i>Bund freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden</i> (Fellowship of Free Pentecostal Churches in Germany)
BMCs	Black Majority Churches
BSFP	<i>Bundesverband der Sozialwerke freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden</i> (Federal Association of Social Work of Free Pentecostal Churches)
CARE	Christian Action, Research and Education
CBS	Central Bureau for Statistics
CCEE	<i>Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae</i> (Roman Catholic Council of European Bishops' Conferences)
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CIO	<i>Interkerkelijk Contact in Overheidszaken</i> (Interdenominational Contact Relating to the Government)
CNEF	<i>Conseil National des Évangéliques de France</i> (National Council of French Evangelicals)
CTE	Churches Together in England
EA	Evangelical Alliance
EEcD	<i>El Encuentro con Dios</i> (Encounter with God [church])
EKD	<i>Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland</i> (Protestant Church in Germany)
Elim	Elim Pentecostal Church

EPTA	European Pentecostal Theological Association
FEEBF	<i>Fédération des Églises Évangéliques Baptistes de France</i> (Churches of the Baptist Federation of France)
FEF	<i>Fédération évangélique de France</i> (Evangelical Federation of France)
FEIC	Fellowship of European International Churches
FEREDE	<i>Federación de Entidades Religiosas Evangélicas de España</i> (Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities in Spain)
FOL	Festival of Life
GATE	Gift of Africa to Europe
GEPeF	<i>Groupe d'Études Pentecôtistes Francophone</i> (Francophone Group for Pentecostal Studies)
GNPT	Global Network for Public Theology
IBI	<i>Istituto Biblico Italiano</i> (Italian Bible Institute)
ICCS	Inter-European Commission on Church and School
JEPTA	<i>Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association</i> (now titled <i>Journal of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity</i> )
KICC	Kingsway International Christian Centre
KSA	<i>Kristet Sambälls Ansvar</i> (Christian Social Responsibility)
MSU	Moscow State University
NCLF	National Church Leaders Forum
NRC	New Religious Consciousness
NTCOG	New Testament Church of God
OPC	One People Commission
P/C	Pentecostal/Charismatic
PCCA	Pentecostal Child Care Association
PEF	Pentecostal European Fellowship
PKN	<i>de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland</i> (Protestant Church in the Netherlands)
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
RRP	Russian Religious Philosophy
RUCEF	Russian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SKIN	Samen Kerk in the Netherlands
VEF	<i>Vereinigung Evangelischer Freikirchen</i> (Association of Protestant Free Churches)
VPE	<i>Verenigde Pinkster- en Evangeliegemeenten</i> (Dutch Assemblies of God)
YWAM	Youth with a Mission
ÖNK	<i>Ökumenisches Netzwerk für Klimagerechtigkeit</i> (Ecumenical Network for Climate Justice)



## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction: Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology in Europe

*Simo Frestadius and Mark J. Cartledge*

## INTRODUCTION

The Day of Pentecost was not a private event. Although the first followers of Christ in Acts 2 are depicted as personally encountering the Holy Spirit, their experience immediately spills out into the public sphere. The crowds are described as being amazed at hearing the disciples in various languages declaring “the mighty works of God” (Acts 2:11). This public witness of the early church starting at Jerusalem and then gradually moving “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) is also the underlying narrative of Acts. As the church moves out from Jerusalem she engages with the various publics in different contexts. From the outset of the history of the church, she is

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engaged with people in all aspects of their lives for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

The modern Pentecostal movement has sought to emulate the experience of the early church in Acts by being a Spirit-empowered public witness. However, although Pentecostals have historically been known for their evangelism and missionary efforts, the implications of their witness for society and culture at large have been less clearly articulated. That is, the development of *Pentecostal public witness* to *Pentecostal public theology* is still underway. The purpose of this book is to contribute towards a Pentecostal public theology, particularly in a European context by drawing together perspectives from a number of scholars.

The introduction aims to do two things. First, it defines and outlines the developments of public theology generally and Pentecostal public theology particularly. Second, it provides an overview of the book's two main sections, as well as identifies the book's main arguments. In the introduction we suggest that although public theology is now an established academic and ecclesial discourse, Pentecostals have been latecomers to the conversation. This is not to devalue the existing contributions of Pentecostal theologians and scholars of Pentecostalism on "Pentecostal" public theology—especially from the turn of the millennium onwards—but it is to point out that to date these contributions have largely been internal Pentecostal conversations and the focus has also mainly been on Pentecostalism in North America and the Global South rather than on Europe. It is this limited discussion on *European* Pentecostal public theology that this book seeks to address, and—although we are cognisant that the book will probably appeal primarily to those already familiar with Pentecostalism—we also hope that it further demonstrates that Pentecostal public theology has a contribution to make to the wider discipline and the church catholic.

## (PENTECOSTAL) PUBLIC THEOLOGY: DEVELOPMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

### *Public Theology*

Whilst questions regarding the church's relationship to society and wider culture have been asked throughout the ages, public theology as a distinct

theological discipline is a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Public theology—like all theologies—is contextual and in this case it is significantly shaped by Western modernity, not least the privatisation of religious faith, experience of increasing religious pluralism, and the gradual development of the “public sphere” as a space between the “private realm” (e.g., family and certain aspects of civil society) and the “sphere of public authority” (e.g., state and court).<sup>2</sup> It was in this (late) modern context that public theology as a distinct discourse emerged in North America from the 1970s onwards. Martin E. Marty seems to have been the first to use the term “public theology” as an alternative to traditional American civil religion.<sup>3</sup> As explained by Sebastian C. H. Kim, while both public theology and civil religion overlap, “civil religion emphasizes the place and role of religion (and Christianity in particular) in relation to the nation and its people in their public life and social responsibilities, whereas public theology starts from the religious community and considers its contributions to the society and nation.”<sup>4</sup> In developing the concept, Marty subsequently published *The Public Church: Mainline-Evangelical-Catholic* (1981) and argued that Protestant, Evangelical and Roman Catholic churches constitute a single “public” church, which, nonetheless, still have their own unique voices and resources to contribute to public life. This historical context of Marty’s

<sup>1</sup>In this section we are drawing from Kristen Deede Johnson, “Public Theology,” in *The New Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, ed. Michael Allen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 231–48. For other helpful introductions to public theology, see E. Harold Breitenberg, Jr., “To Tell the Truth: Will the Real Public Theology Please Stand Up?” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 2 (2003): 55–96, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23561835>; Sebastian Kim, *Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a Catalyst for Open Debate* (London: SCM Press, 2011); and Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age* (London: SCM Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup>Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022), 30. Habermas’s work originally published in German in 1962 remains the classic text on the emergence and development of the public sphere in the West. For his more recent reflections on the concept, see Jürgen Habermas, *A New Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere and Deliberative Politics*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023).

<sup>3</sup>See Martin E. Marty. “Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience.” *The Journal of Religion* 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1974): 332–59, <https://doi.org/10.1086/486401>. For earlier influential discussion on American civil religion, see Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America,” *Daedalus* 134, no. 4 (2005 [1967]), 40–55, <https://doi.org/10.1162/001152605774431464>.

<sup>4</sup>Kim, *Theology in the Public Sphere*, chapter 1 [Perlego].

public theology—especially as expressed in America—is worth underscoring as it assumes that citizens have their private religious views, that people hold a plurality of religious and non-religious views and that there should be a public sphere which is open for different points of view.

Marty has not been the only significant voice in the development of public theology in the USA. The Roman Catholic theologian David Hollenbach urged American Roman Catholics in 1976 to formulate “a *public theology* which attempts to illuminate the urgent moral questions of our time through the explicit use of the great symbols and doctrines of the Christian faith.”<sup>5</sup> His fellow Roman Catholic, David Tracy, argued that all theology is public discourse and he distinguished three main “publics” or audiences: society, academy and the church.<sup>6</sup> Others like the Lutheran-turned Roman Catholic Richard John Neuhaus raised concerns about the American public sphere not facilitating religious speech.<sup>7</sup> The Protestant Max Stackhouse constructed a theologically informed concept of modern economics,<sup>8</sup> and the Lutheran Ronald Frank Thiemann argued that in a pluralistic world theological reflection must guide Christian engagement with public aspects of life.<sup>9</sup> Around a similar time, the conservative Evangelicals Francis A. Schaeffer, Charles W. Colson and Nancy Pearcey lamented what they saw as the demise of the “biblical” Christian worldview in Western culture and in response offered their cures.<sup>10</sup> Linell E. Cady—another influential figure in the development of public theology—has provided helpful reflections on the concepts of private and public spheres in the West.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> David Hollenbach, “Public Theology in America: Some Questions for Catholicism After John Courtney Murray,” *Theological Studies* 37, no. 2 (1976): 299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056397603700204>.

<sup>6</sup> David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 3–28.

<sup>7</sup> Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> Max L. Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modern Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> Ronald F. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1976); Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Linell E. Cady, *Religion, Theology and American Public Life* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).

Although the origins of public theology and its early developments have predominantly taken place in the USA, overtime public theology has gained global attraction. The formation of the Global Network for Public Theology in 2005 can be seen as an important milestone, with its member institutions from around the world. Its *International Journal of Public Theology* (Brill, from 2007) has also included authors from various countries.<sup>12</sup> A brief survey of recent publications further confirms the global and ecumenical nature of contemporary public theology with a growing number of contributions from all the continents and different Christian traditions.<sup>13</sup>

This increasing diversification makes it difficult to provide a simple definition of public theology. Nonetheless, there seems to be some common features shared by different public theologies. For example, E. Harold Breitenberg defines public theology as “theologically informed public discourse about public issues, addressed to the church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious body, as well as the larger public or publics, argued in ways that can be evaluated and judged by publicly available warrants and criteria.”<sup>14</sup> Elaine Graham, not dissimilarly, sees public theology as

the study of the public relevance of religious thought and practice, normally within Christian tradition. It is both academic discipline and ecclesial discourse, in that it seeks to comment and critically reflect from a theological perspective on aspects of public life such as economics, politics, culture and media. Traditionally, public theology sees itself as rooted in religious traditions, but strongly in conversation with secular discourse and public institutions.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>See GNPT: A Global Network for Public Theology, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://gnpublictheology.net>; *International Journal of Public Theology*, accessed January 19, 2024, [https://brill.com/view/journals/ijpt/ijpt-overview.xml?tab\\_body=container-135910-item-135916&contents=about](https://brill.com/view/journals/ijpt/ijpt-overview.xml?tab_body=container-135910-item-135916&contents=about).

<sup>13</sup>The recent Christoph Hübenenthal and Christiane Alpers, eds. *T&T Clark Handbook of Public Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2022) has sections on “the ecumenical scope of public theology” (Part II) and on “the international scope of public theology” (Part V). See also Gnana Patrick, *Public Theology: Indian Concerns, Perspectives and Themes* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2020); Sunday Bobai Agang, ed. *African Public Theology* (Bukuru: Langham Creative Projects, 2020); Matthew Kaemingk, ed. *Reformed Public Theology: A Global Vision for Life in the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021).

<sup>14</sup>Breitenberg, “To Tell the Truth,” 66.

<sup>15</sup>Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, chapter 1 [Perlego].

In light of these definitions and the brief overview of the development of public theology provided above, we suggest that public theology typically has four characteristics. First, public theology is a *tradition-specific theology*. That is, it is rooted in and flows out of a particular religious tradition; it speaks and acts from that perspective. Second, it has *multiple audiences*, including its own religious tradition, other religious traditions/comprehensive worldviews, as well as “the larger public or publics.” Third, it is both an *ecclesial and academic discourse* and it should intend “to be intelligible and convincing to the adherents within its own religious tradition while at the same time being comprehensible and possibly persuasive to those outside it.”<sup>16</sup> The rationality utilised will largely depend on which audience and type of discourse with which one is engaged. Fourth, it deals theologically with *issues in the public sphere*, such as “economics, politics, culture and media.”<sup>17</sup> Because it focuses on public issues and public life, public theology cannot help but be interdisciplinary, which adds a further element of complexity, notwithstanding those already provided by the aforementioned multiple audiences and types of discourse.

Public theology thus defined has many similarities to political theology and liberation theologies. However, as noted by Kristen Deede Johnson, there are arguably two main differences. The first one is context. Unlike public theology, modern political theology emerged in post-World War Two in Germany thanks to the efforts of people like Johann Baptist Metz, Dorothee Sölle and Jürgen Moltmann.<sup>18</sup> The horrors of two World Wars convinced these theologians that the church cannot remain in the private sphere but needs to be politically active. Liberation theology in its Latin American form developed in the 1960s through the influence of Gustavo Gutierrez and others.<sup>19</sup> The issue for them was the poverty and oppression experienced by many due to systemic injustices. Second, methodologically public theology—more so than political or liberation theology—seeks to

<sup>16</sup> Breitenberg, “To Tell the Truth,” 65–66.

<sup>17</sup> Kim, *Theology in the Public Sphere*, 11–15, identifies six interrelated public domains: the state, the media, religious communities, the academy, civil society and the market.

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1967); Dorothee Sölle, *Political Theology*, trans. John Shelley (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. David Smith (London: Burns and Oates, 1980).

<sup>19</sup> See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 50th anniversary edition, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2023).

address multiple audiences and engage in different types of discourse. In other words, it tries to apply multiple rationalities in its attempt to be publicly accessible and persuasive,<sup>20</sup> although increasingly both political theology and liberation theology have expanded the range of topics and range of audiences to which they address their attention.

### *Pentecostals and Public Theology*

The nature of “Pentecostalism,” it has to be admitted, is a contested academic concept, even though there are a number of societies that study this group of people. It includes groups that self-consciously designate themselves as “Pentecostals” because they have constructed identity narratives around the day of Pentecost and Holy Spirit reception texts in Luke-Acts and Paul; and they have articulated doctrines from these texts, such as baptism in the Holy Spirit, the evidence of glossolalia, empowerment for witness, signs and wonders, charismata and the idea of a full gospel based on a functional Christology (Jesus as saviour, sanctifier, baptiser in the Holy Spirit, healer and coming king). Many of the Pentecostal denominations that emerged from the early twentieth century developed doctrines and practices associated with these ideas.<sup>21</sup>

Intertwined with these doctrines and practices is a spirituality based on an ongoing encounter with the Holy Spirit in an immanent and dramatic fashion that is transformative and empowering. This spirituality can be found within churches throughout history but at the beginning of the twentieth century became institutionalised within denominations emerging from Evangelical and especially Wesleyan traditions.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, it emerged again in the so-called Charismatic Renewal of the 1960s among more liturgical Protestant and Catholic traditions, as well as other Free Church traditions.<sup>23</sup> In addition to these “Renewalist” groups there emerged independent groups and movements (e.g., the Latter Rain movement, the Jesus People, the House Church movement in the UK and

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, “Public Theology,” 246–48. For the differences and similarities between public theology, political theology and liberation theologies, see also Kim, *Theology in the Public Sphere*, chapter 1 [Perlego].

<sup>21</sup> Allan H. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 17–156.

<sup>22</sup> Mark J. Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 19–50.

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 157–75.

other “non-denominational” groups around the world).<sup>24</sup> Globally, there are indigenous groups that showed features of this spirituality embedded in local contexts throughout the twentieth century without subscribing to specific “Pentecostal” doctrines in any official manner.<sup>25</sup> The plurality of this spirituality globally has led to the view among many scholars of “Pentecostalism” that the phenomenon is diffuse, heterogeneous and hybrid.<sup>26</sup> This leads to the understanding that it is difficult to pin down with precision. While we acknowledge that there is certainly plurality and hybridity, we wish to affirm that there is a “family resemblance” of sorts among these different groups globally.<sup>27</sup> So that it does make sense to speak of something that is common among these different groups that allows us to speak of them as a religious category. This approach does not wish to homogenise these groups and we are happy to speak of “Pentecostals,” but in our view the “family resemblance” should not be dismissed because of these differences of expression.

It should be noted that most of our contributors in this volume identify with the first category, namely “denominational Pentecostalism,” while a smaller number work from a “Renewalist” perspective but advocate for a “Pentecostal” construct in its broadest sense of a pneumatology shaped by the day of Pentecost and the Spirit-reception texts in Luke-Acts. In this sense “Pentecostal” includes aspects that might be classified elsewhere as “Charismatic.” Thus, “Pentecostal” should be viewed as the umbrella term for the traditions that are being expressed in this volume.

So, what about Pentecostals and public theology? Within wider Christian public theology Pentecostals appear to have made limited contributions. For example, only a handful of Pentecostals have published in

<sup>24</sup>The three waves (classical/denominational Pentecostalism; charismatic renewal; and third wave/vineyard) model is now regarded as problematic even in North America, which is why we have not used it. It was initially proposed by C. Peter Wagner, *The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit: Encountering the Power of Signs and Wonders* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1988).

<sup>25</sup>See Allan H. Anderson et al. “Varieties, Taxonomies and Definitions,” in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan H. Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13–29.

<sup>26</sup>Michael Wilkinson and Jörg Hausteijn, “Introduction: Remaking the Pentecostal World,” in *The Pentecostal World*, ed. Michael Wilkinson and Jörg Hausteijn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 1–16.

<sup>27</sup>Anderson et al. “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,” 26, based on Walter J. Hollenweger’s theological criteria. See Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 18–19.

the *International Journal of Public Theology*,<sup>28</sup> and interestingly in the recent *T&T Clark Handbook of Public Theology* (2022) there are no self-identified Pentecostal authors and Pentecostalism is also excluded from the book's "Part II: The Ecumenical Scope of Public Theology."

This does not mean that Pentecostals have not engaged in public theology. Important Pentecostal academic works include Robert Beckford's *Dread and Pentecostal: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (2000), as well as Amos Yong's *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (2010). Both Beckford and Yong understand "political" broadly as a reference to various aspects of public life, rather than just to political governance. The edited collections *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (2007), edited by Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, and *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism* (2013), edited by Donald E. Miller, Kimon H. Sargeant and Richard Flory, are significant in identifying the social engagement of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians globally. Other more recent works on public theology and/or public church are Daniela C. Augustine's *The Spirit and the Common Good: Shared Flourishing in the Image of God* (2019); *Megachurches and Social Engagement: Public Theology in Practice* (2019) edited by Mark J. Cartledge, Sarah L. B. Dunlop, Heather Buckingham and Sophie Bremner; Mark J. Cartledge's *The Holy Spirit and Public Life: Empowering Ecclesial Praxis* (2022); *The Politics of the Spirit: Pentecostal Reflections on Public Responsibility and the Common Good* (2023) edited by Daniela C. Augustine and Chris E. W. Green; and Wolfgang Vondey's *The Scandal of Pentecost: A Theology of the Public Church* (2023). Works of Pentecostal public theology in the Palgrave

<sup>28</sup>For example, see Amos Yong, "What Spirit(s), Which Public(s)? The Pneumatologies of Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity," *International Journal of Public Theology* 7, no. 3 (2013): 241–59, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-12341296>; Mark J. Cartledge, "Public Theology and Empirical Research: Developing an Agenda," *International Journal of Public Theology* 10, no. 2 (2016): 145–66, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-12341440>; Antipas L. Harris, "Emerging African American Pentecostal Sources in Public Theology," *International Journal of Public Theology* 13, no. 4 (2019): 472–93, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-12341589>; Corneliu Constantineanu, "'Instruments of Justice': Biblical Contributions to a Public Theology of Engagement in Eastern European Context," *International Journal of Public Theology* 14, no. 3 (2020): 355–71, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-12341624>; Antipas L. Harris, "Black Protest as Public Theology: Considering Bourdieu's Habitus Theory with a Comparative Analysis of Protest Approaches in the Civil Rights Movement and the Hip-Hop Generation," *International Journal of Public Theology* 16, no. 4 (2022): 422–46, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15697320-20220059>.

Macmillan CHARIS: Christianity and Renewal—Interdisciplinary Studies series—to which this book belongs—are Nimi Wariboko’s *The Charismatic City and the Public Resurgence of Religion: A Pentecostal Social Ethics of Cosmopolitan Urban Life* (2014); Steven M. Studebaker’s *A Pentecostal Political Theology for American Renewal: Spirit of the Kingdoms, Citizens of the Cities* (2016); Naar M’fundisi-Holloway’s *Pentecostal and Charismatic Spiritualities and Civic Engagement in Zambia* (2018); and Joel Halldorf’s *Pentecostal Politics in a Secular World: The Life and Leadership of Lewi Pethrus* (2020).

Despite these notable studies, to date there is no book on Pentecostal public theology in Europe. Most studies on Pentecostal engagement with politics, society and culture have focused on the Global South and North America. Themes such as race (Robert Beckford), economics (Daniela C. Augustine) and political engagement (Joel Halldorf) have been discussed to some extent in the context of European Pentecostalism. However, there is currently no single volume that provides a European historical overview, or a work that brings various European voices together to discuss the current challenges and possible trajectories for Pentecostal public theology in a constructive fashion. This book aims to do both things by bringing together leading and emerging European Pentecostal and Charismatic scholars.

## EUROPEAN PENTECOSTAL PUBLIC THEOLOGY: OVERVIEW AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BOOK

The book is divided into two parts: the first part offering historical studies on European Pentecostal public engagement and the second constructive chapters on pertinent public issues in Europe from a Pentecostal theological perspective.

### *Part I: Historical Studies on European Pentecostal Public Engagement*

The first part focuses on eight countries covering EuroVoc’s four European regions: Sweden (Northern Europe); United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and France (Western Europe); Russia (Central and Eastern

Europe); Italy and Spain (Southern Europe).<sup>29</sup> These chapters do not claim to offer definitive studies of Pentecostal public theology and activity in the 44 or so European countries. Neither do they provide generic regional chapters that try to cover multiple nations simultaneously. Rather, each chapter aims to discuss a single country, which not only helps make sense of Pentecostal public engagement in that respective country but also functions as a case study from a particular European region. The eight countries have been chosen, because they have some of the largest populations and have exerted significant influence in their respective regions. Thus, even if they do not capture the diversity and complexity of their region, they are still illustrative of Pentecostal public theology from their region. Pragmatically speaking, they also happen to be the countries that we secured scholars on who could write in English, which shows the limitations of a European study written only in English.

In Chap. 2, Joel Halldorf discusses Pentecostal public theology in Sweden with a particular focus on Lewi Pethrus (1884–1974), who was the de facto leader of the Swedish Pentecostal movement for most of the twentieth century. Building on his previous research, Halldorf offers a historical overview of how Pethrus and the wider Swedish Pentecostal movement moved from initial prophetic rejection of society to embracing “soft Constantianism,” before engaging in full-on political activity. These developments include Pethrus starting a daily paper *Dagen* in 1945, organising a major lobbying group in 1956 and launching a political party *Kristen Demokratisk Samling* (“the Christian Democrats”) in 1964. According to Halldorf, it was secularisation in Lutheran Sweden that propelled Pethrus into politics. Pethrus believed that Christianity should lead people to personal salvation in Christ, but also foster morality in society. Moreover, Pethrus believed that rightly ordered culture would also make people more receptive to the gospel. Pethrus and the Swedish Pentecostal movement is a fascinating case study within global Pentecostalism, especially because Swedish Pentecostals on the whole have had “conservative values in questions of morality” but they have been “pro welfare, environment, immigration and global solidarity,” which differentiates them, for example, from many white Pentecostals in the USA.

<sup>29</sup> 7206 Europe, EU Vocabularies, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies/concept-scheme/-/resource?uri=http://eurovoc.europa.eu/100277>.

Moving from Northern Europe towards Western Europe, William K. Kay in Chap. 3 explores Pentecostal public theology in the UK. He notes how early Pentecostal public theology tended to be implicit and practical, rather than explicit or publicly articulated. Influenced by expectations of the imminent return of Christ, British Pentecostals also focused mainly on personal evangelism and mission. Indeed, Kay opines that the implicit Pentecostal position appears to have been that “revival” could transform individuals, which in turn would then transform communities. During World War Two, Pentecostals did discuss military service and pacifism, but it was not until the 1960s when they began to move away from what could be seen as ecclesial isolationism. Interestingly, Kay quotes the British Pentecostal pioneer Donald Gee (1891–1966) who in the 1960s lamented at the Assemblies of God conference to his fellow ministers how Pentecostals who claim to be filled with the Spirit of God still “seem to live in a little world of our own” and have “nothing to say in reply to the [public] questions thoughtful men and women are asking.” The public engagement that emerged due to the efforts of Gee and others during this time focused largely on public morality and care for children and the elderly. Issues relating to social justice and environmentalism among UK Pentecostals have only really been explored intentionally in the twenty-first century. That said, Kay does highlight how the black Pentecostal churches have historically taken more activist positions relating to issues of social justice.

In Chap. 4, Sven Brenner examines German Pentecostal public engagement under the title “From Marginalisation to Limited Public Engagement.” He argues how the German Pentecostal public posture has been influenced by their specific history. Key historical events include the “*Berliner Erklärung*” (The Berlin Declaration) of 1909 in which other pietistic Christians condemned the Pentecostal movement as being demonic, as well as the systematic fight against so-called sects, including Pentecostals, by the National Socialists (1933–1945). These experiences have contributed to Pentecostals developing a separatist and marginal identity, which in turn has shaped their approach to public engagement. This isolationist identity has been further reinforced by the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches having certain public privileges in Germany, not shared by Pentecostals and other free churches. Despite this history—as well as some Pentecostal eschatological views that have also played their part in societal withdrawal—Brenner observes that the paradigm shift “from escapism to social ethics” is discernible in current Pentecostalism.

He refers to various initiatives in *Bund freikirchlicher Pfingstgemeinden* (BFP) (Fellowship of Free Pentecostal Churches)—the largest Pentecostal denomination in Germany—that encourage socio-political commitment, although Brenner remains uncertain to what extent these issues have yet reached “the grassroots of the Pentecostal churches, let alone are recognised as important.”

Unlike the more historical method adopted by the previous authors, in Chap. 5 Huibert H. Zegwaart utilises a more journalistic approach when discussing Pentecostal public theology in the Netherlands. He begins by identifying how the Netherlands is increasingly a secularised country, before reflecting on his various interactions and interviews with different Dutch Pentecostal denominations, networks and leaders with respect to public theology. He argues that Pentecostals in the Netherlands have shied away from public discourse overall. Zegwaart identifies various reasons for this, not least the relatively small number of Pentecostals in Dutch society, ecclesiocentrism as well as the limited education of pastors. Having said that, Zegwaart notes that this does not mean that Pentecostals are completely absent from society. To the contrary, he writes of various initiatives where Pentecostals have served their communities, which he calls “public practical theology.” In the Netherlands—like in the UK—it is often the migrant Pentecostal groups that are taking the lead on public issues.

Marc Déclaudure in Chap. 6 explores Pentecostal perspectives on and approaches to public engagement by focusing specifically on the French Assemblies of God (*les Assemblées de Dieu de France* [AdD]). He sets out the historical context by narrating the development of the paradoxical Roman Catholic-secular imagination within French society, which essentially maintains that to be French is to be Roman Catholic and/or secular. In the words of Déclaudure, whilst religious pluralism “is in the law,” it is “not in people’s minds. To be a Christian is obviously to be Catholic, and non-Catholic French are somehow a little bit less French than others.” This cultural assumption—combined with Pentecostal dispensational eschatology, emphasis on personal evangelism and general scepticism towards academic theology—has caused French Pentecostals to withdraw from society. However, according to Déclaudure the situation is changing. For the last few decades French Pentecostal churches have increasingly been involved in social projects, and their closer alignment with Protestant-Evangelicalism in France has amplified their public voice. The latest developments include the formation of a group of French Pentecostal